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Why Are Democrats Driving Regime Change in Venezuela?

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Many see Trump conspiring with oilmen to capture Venezuelan petroleum reserves. Trump's earlier blunt talk about seizing oilfields buttresses this thesis. As well, ExxonMobil, ConocoPhillips and Chevron appreciate better than anyone the astronomic value of Venezuela's heavy oil. There are, however, flaws in the petro-conquistador thesis. Foremost, it does not explain why oil-resistant Democrats and Europeans play lead roles in this regime change travesty.

On December 18, 2014 a Democrat-led Senate passed the *Venezuela Defense of Human Rights and Civil Society Act*. This legislation, sponsored by Democratic Senator Robert Menendez, imposed sanctions on Venezuela while promising support for Venezuelan "*civil society*." The Act also sought to meet "*the information needs of the Venezuelan people*" through publications and broadcasts; and through "*distribution of circumvention technology*." Obama signed immediately.

On March 9, 2015 Obama declared:

> "…a national emergency with respect to the unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States presented by the situation in Venezuela."

His accompanying Executive Order 13692 extended sanctions while undertaking to: "*support greater political expression in Venezuela*."

At this time the US deep state conducted an orchestra of American and European agencies and foundations disbursing $50 million a year to Venezuelan "civil society" (opposition politicians, student activists and journalists). Key agencies were USAID and National Endowment for Democracy. Participating foundations included: (Jimmy) Carter Centre; (Soros's) Open Society; (Democratic Party-affiliated) National Democratic Institute for International Affairs; plus several Spanish and German concerns.

On January 16, 2017, four days before Trump's inauguration, Obama renewed his declaration designating Venezuela a national security threat. Venezuela's Foreign Minister called the move "*new aggression by Barack Obama*" extending Obama's "*legacy of hate and serious violation of international law*."

On January 4, 2019 a Democrat-led House of Representatives swore in.

On January 10 House Foreign Affairs Committee Chair, Eliot Engel (Democrat-NY) said he would waste no time holding "*Mr. Maduro*" accountable. Simultaneously, former DNC Chair and Hillary Clinton fixer, Democratic Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman-Schultz unveiled her *Venezuelan-Russian Threat Mitigation Act.* She was flanked by former Clinton cabinet member and Clinton Foundation boss, Democratic Congresswoman Donna Shalala who announced her *Venezuelan Arms Restriction Act* to prevent weapons sales, including non-lethal police gear, to Venezuela. Next up was Democratic Congresswoman Debbie Mucarsel-Powell, sponsor of the *Venezuelan Humanitarian Assistance Act* aimed at allowing US operatives to bypass Venezuelan authorities and distribute "aid" directly to Venezuelans.

On January 24, less than 24 hours after Juan Guaido declared himself Venezuelan President, Democratic Congressman Adam Schiff (House Intelligence Committee Chair) blamed Maduro's "*dictatorial*" rule for devastating Venezuela's economy, then recognised Guaido as Venezuela's "*rightful leader*." Senate Minority Whip Dick Durbin (Democrat-IL) piped in calling Venezuela's 2018 election a sham before endorsing Guaido's presidency.

Of 280 Democratic Senators and Representatives 3 dissented. This troika did not include Bernie Sanders. On January 24 Bernie boarded the war-train with a battle-whoop beginning:

> "The Maduro government in Venezuela has been waging a violent crackdown on Venezuelan civil society, violated the constitution by dissolving the National Assembly and was re-elected last year in an election that many observers said was fraudulent. Further the economy is a disaster and millions are migrating.

Bernie goes on to warn of the perils of regime change while leaving wide open the door to punitive sanctions. His statement is silent on America's economic war on Venezuela. His support for "civil society" is willfully naïve about such groups' involvement in political meddling up to and including regime change. (Bernie supported starvation sanctions against Iraq, and the bombing of Serbia. He calls Hugo Chavez a "*dead communist dictator*.")

Regarding Venezuela the Democrats march in lockstep with: the Liberal Party of Canada under PM Trudeau; Merkel's ruling coalition in Germany; French President Macron; and the governments of Sweden, Denmark, Austria and Spain.

These governments are committed to phasing petroleum out of their economies. All champion the Paris Climate Accord. None can be quickly dismissed as Exxon's goons. None take orders from Trump. Thus, the petro-conquistador thesis appears ill-equipped to explain their behaviour.

No doubt Washington DC hosts cabals of oilmen and politicos coveting unfettered access to the Orinoco Belt. Here, however, it seems fantastical that President Maduro might be removed by anything short of civil war; or that the Orinoco Belt might be exploitable amidst the Vietnam-style conflagration surely to ensue. Then, arises the enigmatic spectacle of a dozen "liberal-leftist-environmentalist" Western parties and governments frantically tilting at the same windmill. Pourquoi?

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